



WYOMING DEPARTMENT OF CORRECTIONS

Policy and Procedure #1.207 Employee Tuition Reimbursement Program

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Authority: Wyoming Statute(s): 25-1-104; 25-1-105 ACA Standard(s): 4-4093; 1-ABC-1D-17 2-CO-1D-09	Effective Date: April 30, 2015 Revision/Review History: 04/01/14 04/01/13 01/15/12 07/01/10 07/25/08 Summary of Revision/Review: Updates existing policy pursuant to annual review.
Cross Reference of Policy:	Supersedes Existing Policy :
Approved: R.O. Lampert Robert O. Lampert, Director	
4-17-15 Date	

REFERENCE

1. ATTACHMENTS
 - A. WDOC Form #140: Application for Tuition Reimbursement
2. OTHER – None Noted



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PURPOSE

- A. **Employee Benefits for Continued Education.** The purpose of this policy is to provide for a tuition reimbursement program for qualified employees of the Wyoming Department of Corrections (WDOC) seeking further educational opportunities.

II. POLICY

- A. **General Policy.** It is the policy of WDOC to encourage employees to continue their education through staff development, training programs, outside workshops, seminars, and other formal educational programs. (ACA 4-4093, 1-ABC-1D-17) (2-CO-1D-09)
- B. **Tuition Reimbursement Program.** It is the policy of WDOC to provide a tuition reimbursement program which will offer financial assistance for qualified employees to become better qualified to perform their assigned duties and to enhance their career opportunities within the Department.
1. This policy refers to education courses, taken by a qualified employee on a voluntary basis, which are not required by WDOC in the course of the employee's employment.
 2. Qualified employees must meet eligibility requirements and receive approval from their supervisor, CEO and the Division of Central Services in order to receive tuition reimbursement.

III. DEFINITIONS

- A. **Central Office:** The Director, administrators and related support and management staff responsible for the administration and oversight of all aspects of the Wyoming Department of Corrections.
- B. **Chief Executive Officer (CEO):** A CEO is identified, but not limited to, the following positions: Director, Deputy Director, division administrators, deputy administrators, wardens, district supervisors, adult community corrections coordinator, and adult community corrections directors.
- C. **Course:** *(For this policy only.)* A class or unit of curriculum offered by an accredited school, college, or university where education is imparted in a series of lessons or class meetings.



- D. Tuition:** *(For this policy only.)* The cost imposed by an accredited school, college or university for instruction in an identified course. Tuition does not include the cost imposed for course-specific fees; the cost for course books or materials; admission fees; college, university or program-specific fees; or any other cost imposed by an institution of higher learning other than that specifically charged for the instruction of an identified course.
- E. Qualified Employee:** *(For this policy only.)* Any person employed full-time by the Wyoming Department of Corrections, not including at-will contract employees, who meets the eligibility requirements established in this policy. Contract staff and persons providing services to the Wyoming Department of Corrections who are not employees of the Department shall not be considered qualified employees.

IV. PROCEDURE

- A. Requirements for Approval of Tuition Reimbursement.** Qualified employees taking part in higher educational opportunities may be eligible for tuition reimbursement under the following provisions:
1. The Tuition Reimbursement Program is contingent upon available funding. It shall be the sole determination of WDOC as to whether or not funds are available for this program and the amount of reimbursement that will be available per employee per semester based upon available funding.
 2. Courses must be from an accredited school, college or university.
 3. Single-day seminars, non-credit workshops, and non-credit evening classes do not qualify for tuition reimbursement, unless approved as part of job duties (*i.e.*, conferences, etc.).
 4. Participation in course work shall not interfere with a qualified employee's normally scheduled work hours, unless approval of a flexible schedule is obtained from his/her supervisor. If flexible schedule agreements are approved for the staff member, such schedule shall ensure the staff member's obligation to WDOC, (*i.e.*, 40 hours a week for a full-time staff member) and shall comply with Chapter 18 of the State of Wyoming Personnel Rules.
 5. Courses must be job-related, (*i.e.*, curriculum content is designed to contribute to performance improvement in the qualified employee's current job in terms of efficiency and increased skills; the course is undertaken for the purpose of preparing the individual, through skill



enhancement, for advancement in the WDOC; or the course is contributing toward a job-related degree.)

6. Qualified employees seeking reimbursement must have satisfactorily completed their original probationary period. (Employment with another Wyoming state agency is applicable.)
7. Qualified employees receiving tuition reimbursement(s) shall remain in the service of the WDOC for at least twelve (12) months following their last reimbursement received. Staff members who terminate prior to twelve (12) months of their last reimbursement may be required to repay the amount of tuition assistance received during their last twelve (12) months of employment with the WDOC.

B. Conditions for Tuition Reimbursement. Upon approval of the WDOC, tuition reimbursement will be granted under the following terms:

1. Qualified employees are limited to tuition reimbursement for three (3) credit hours per semester or the equivalent number of quarterly hours.
2. Reimbursement may be up to, and not to exceed, fifty percent (50%) of the current University of Wyoming resident rate per credit hour. For the 2014-2016 school years the cost per in-state undergraduate credit hour is \$115.00.
 - i. Qualified employees attending educational institutions whose cost per credit hour exceeds that of the University of Wyoming (*e.g.*, private colleges or universities), will be reimbursed no more than up to fifty percent (50%) of the current University of Wyoming resident rate per credit hour.
 - ii. Qualified employees attending educational institutions whose cost per credit hour is less than that of the University of Wyoming (*e.g.*, junior colleges), will be reimbursed fifty percent (50%) of the cost per credit hour of that institution.
 - iii. The upper amount of tuition reimbursement will be based on the University of Wyoming cost per credit hour at the time or enrollment.
 - iv. Reimbursement will be paid for the cost of tuition only. Course fees, books, or other assessments are the responsibility of the qualified employee.



3. Qualified employees eligible for and receiving scholarships, grants, and/or other educational reimbursements through other governmental programs shall be required to use such financial aid first. If the cost of an approved course is more than the amount available from other such sources, WDOC will reimburse the qualified employee the remaining balance of the tuition cost, up to fifty percent (50%) of the current University of Wyoming resident rate per credit hour.
 4. Course work must have been completed with a grade C or above.
- C. **Process for Obtaining Approval.** Every effort should be made to coordinate educational activities with staff responsibilities.
1. The qualified employee shall obtain approval from his/her immediate supervisor and shall initiate WDOC Form #140, *Application for Tuition Reimbursement*. The supervisor shall approve or deny the application.
 - i. If the course conflicts with the qualified employee's regular schedule, the application shall be denied unless other arrangements (e.g., a flexible schedule, use of annual leave, etc.) are approved by the qualified employee's supervisor.
 2. Upon permission from the immediate supervisor, the qualified employee must submit to his/her CEO a properly completed WDOC Form #140.
 2. The CEO will review WDOC Form #140 and approve or disapprove the qualified employee's application. WDOC Form #140 shall then be submitted to the Division of Central Services Human Resources Office for final approval and signature by the Director or designee.
 3. The Division of Central Services Human Resources Office shall notify the qualified employee whether the authorization has been granted for tuition reimbursement.
 4. WDOC Form #140, *Application for Tuition Reimbursement*, should be kept in the qualified employee's personnel file.
- D. **Reimbursement upon Successful Course Completion.** Upon completion of the course work, the qualified employee shall be eligible for tuition reimbursement if he/she receives a grade of C or higher.
1. The qualified employee shall send the following documents to the Division of Central Services Human Resources Office for verification and processing:



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- i. A completed State of Wyoming Payment Voucher (*State of Wyoming WOLFS-102 Form*);
 - ii. A bill or statement from the college or university listing tuition charges separate from any other charges; and
 - iii. An official copy of the course transcript. (Note: The transcript should be attached to the WDOC Form #140, *Application for Tuition Reimbursement*, and added to the qualified employee's personnel file.)
 2. After the grade has been verified, the Division of Central Services Human Resources Office shall forward the State of Wyoming Payment Voucher (*State of Wyoming WOLFS-102 Form*) to the business manager of the qualified employee's correctional facility (or to Central Office Accounting for qualified employees working at a location other than a correctional facility) for process of payment.
- E. **Income Tax Responsibilities.** All tuition assistance reimbursements received by qualified employees for graduate level courses may be subject to taxation. If such a determination is made, qualified employees can expect such reimbursement to be viewed as income and reported to the Internal Revenue Service and/or other appropriate governmental entities.

V. TRAINING POINTS

- A. What is the process an employee must go through in order to receive tuition reimbursement?
- B. What is the amount of tuition reimbursement the WDOC offers to qualified employees?
- C. What are the conditions for tuition reimbursement approval?